

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4832

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TAGS: AFSP, LE

SUBJECT: FY-1977 COMMERCIAL BUDGET

1. AMEMBASSY BEIRUT REQUESTS ESTABLISHMENT TWO COMMERCIAL POSITIONS I.E. FSL-1 COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST - SALARY AND BENEFITS

\$15,360; OTHER COSTS \$2,040; TOTAL \$17,400; AND FSL-6,

COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT/SECRETARY - SALARY AND BENEFITS - \$7,090;

OTHER COTS - \$1,800; TOTAL - \$8,890.

2. REQUEST BASED ON BURGEONING WORKLOAD LINKED TO GROWTH MIDDLE EAST AS MARKET U.S. GOODS. AS GATEWAY TO MIDDLE EAST AND SITE OFFICES 275 U.S. BUSINESSES AND BANKS, BEIRUT EXPERIENCING STRONGLY RISING LEVEL OFFICIAL AND BUSINESS VISITORS INCLUDING TRADE MISSIONS. EXPORT STATISTICS SHOW MIDDLE EAST NOW TAKING OVER 8 PERCENT U.S. EXPORTS COMPARED TO LESS THAN 5 PERCENT TWO YEARS AGO. EXPORTS TO LEBANON 1973, \$162 MILLION; 1974, \$287 MILLION.

3. MINIMUM 50 NEW OFFICES AMERICAN BUSINESS AND BANKS OPENED IN BEIRUT IN FY 1975 (SEE A-95 OF APRIL 22). AS DEPARTMENT CAN APPRECIATE, EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL STAFF OCCUPIED RESPONDING VARIETY BUSINESS FACILITATION REQUESTS FROM LARGE LOCAL AMERICAN AND LEBANESE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES. IN ADDITION, DURING PAST YEAR EIGHT MONTHLY MEETINGS ARRANGED AT EMBASSY WITH AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY (AVERAGE ATTENDANCE 40 PERSONS) TO HEAR SPEAKER AND DISCUSS TOPICS OF COMMON INTEREST. PLANNED FOR FY 1976 IS EMBASSY-SPONSORED ONE OR TWO DAY CONFERENCE OF RESIDENT BEIRUT MANAGERS U.S. BUSINESS AND BANKS. ALSO COMPLETION SURVEY U.S.

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ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN LEBANON WHICH STALLED TO DATE DUE OTHER

MORE IMMEDIATE WORK DEMANDS. IN ADDITION, WE SHOULD LIKE ORGANIZE AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN BUYERS GROUP TO VISIT U.S. IN COMING MONTHS.

4. GENERAL TEMPO OF WORK ACTIVITY RISING STRONGLY AS REFLECTED IN FOLLOWING FIGURES: TOTAL WTDRS COMPLETED 1974, 171; 1974; 204; 1975, 220 (ESTIMATED) DESPITE RECURRING CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND DETERIORATING LOCAL MAIL DELIVERY THIS SPRING. TOTAL ADS COMPLETED 1973, 18; 1974, 46; 1975, 61 TO DATE. COMMERCIAL LIBRARY VISITORS MONTHLY AVERAGE 1973, 195; 1974, 220; 1975, 267 (BASED ON JANUARY-APRIL). COMMERCIAL LIBRARY TELEPHONE INQUIRIES MONTHLY AVERAGE 1973, 253; 1974, 284; 1975, 342 (BASED ON JANUARY-APRIL). OFFICE COMATT CURRENTLY RECEIVES MONTHLY AVERAGE 90 VISITS; 120 LETTERS; AND 150 TELEPHONE INQUIRIES WHICH IS 25 PERCENT ABOVE TEMPO WORK ACTIVITY ONLY YEAR AGO. DURING FY 1975, SECOND ANNUAL SURVEY OF WAGES AND BENEFITS PAID LOCAL EMPLOYEES U.S. FIRMS COMPLETED BY COMMATT AND LABATT. THIS PROGRAMMED FOR ANNUAL REVISION IN RESPONSE USEFULNESS TO RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND NEW FIRMS OPENING OFFICES BEIRUT. ALSO, VISIT USA PROGRAM BEGUN IN COOPERATION WITH USIS AND LOCAL U.S. AND LEBANESE TRAVEL REPRESENTATIVES MERITS ADDED ATTENTION.

5. FACT IS CURRENT LOCAL COMMERCIAL COMPLEMENT OF 3 STAFF ASSISTANTS AND 2 SECRETARIES FULLY OCCUPIED. BUSY COMMERCIAL LIBRARY NOW BEING CLOSED TO PUBLIC AT 2 P.M. DAILY INSTEAD OF 5:30 PM TO PERMIT STAFF MEMBER TO HELP ON OTHER COMMERCIAL TASKS PARTICULARLY ADS REQUESTS WHICH HAVE MUSHROOMED. ALSO FALL 1975 REVISION OF POPULAR "AMERICAN BUSINESS CONCERNS IN LEBANON" BOOKLET, WHICH VERY HELPFUL IN TRADE PROMOTION AND REFERENCE FOR DEPARTMENT, SISTER POSTS, AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY, IS TO BE PUT TO CONTRACT UNDER COMATT SUPERVISION. CURRENTLY, STAFF BY DINT OF CONSIDERABLE OVERTIME BY AMERICAN MEMBERS, ABLE PROVIDE BASIC REQUESTED COMMERCIAL SERVICES TO VISITORS AND RESIDENTS, MEET CERP SCHEDULE INCLUDING BASIC MARKET RESEARCH DATA, AND PROVIDE SOME ESSENTIAL VOLUNTARY REPORTING SUCH AS COMPREHENSIVE MAJOR PROJECTS SUMMARY (SEE A-142 OF JUNE 5, 1975). HOWEVER, OBVIOUS TO US VOLUNTARY ANALYTICAL REPORTING AND NUMBER TRADE OPPORTUNITIES NOT AT DESIRED LEVEL AS EMBASSY FORCED INCREASINGLY RESPOND TO "BRUSH FIRES" AND WORK ON CRASH BASIS AS FOR EXAMPLE WHEN SIX-MAN STATE OF WASHINGTON TRADE MISSION SHOWED UP IN FEBRUARY WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING.

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6. WISH POINT OUT, THIS REQUEST FOR LOCAL ASSISTANT AND LOCAL SECRETARY WILL SERVE ONLY TO RESTORE COMMERCIAL STAFFING LEVEL TO THAT OF THREE YEARS AGO WHEN THESE PERSONNEL FUNDED BY COMMERCE WERE TRANSFERRED TO RTDO, AN ENTITY WITH NEW SEPARATE RESPONSIBILITIES. WITH EXCEPTION EDITING REGIONAL NEWSLETTER, WORK RESPONSIBILITIES EMBASSY COMMERCIAL STAFF REMAIN SAME AS PRE-RTDO ESTABLISHMENT. THUS CURRENT LOCAL COMMERCIAL STAFF WHICH

DEALING WITH VASTLY INCREASED WORKLOAD ACTUALLY BELOW 1972 LEVEL.

7. ESTIMATED COSTS FY-1975, 1976, AND 1977 AS FOLLOWS:

	FY-75	FY-76	FY-77
COMMERCIAL TRAVEL	0	2,000	2,000
COMMERCIAL LIBRARY	\$1,492	1,800	2,000
COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER	\$5,002	7,000	8,000
COMMERCIAL CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$ 136	200	250
COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION	\$1,240	2,100	2,500

NOTE SIX ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER TO BE ISSUED IN FY 76 AND 77
VERSUS FIVE IN FY 1975. ABOVE FY 1975 REPRESENTATION FIGURES
DOES NOT INCLUDE \$625 UNREIMBURSED EXPENSES.

GODLEY

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